



# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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## FEBRUARY 1979

SEE "NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES" BELOW TABLE 1 ON PAGE 2. THE SALES COMPARISONS IN THIS REPORT ARE BASED ON REVISED DATA.

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in February, after adjusting for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes were estimated at \$71.5 billion. This adjusted figure was about 1 percent above January 1979 and 14 percent greater than February a year ago. The adjusted February estimate, excluding the automotive group was about 1 percent above January and 12 percent above February last year.

Adjusted sales of durable goods stores were virtually unchanged from January, while sales of nondurable goods stores increased 1 percent. Compared with sales for February 1978, durable goods stores increased 19 percent, and nondurable goods stores increased 11 percent.

The estimate of retail sales for January, based on modified preliminary results from the full sample of retail stores was about \$71.0 billion, \$0.3 billion below the January Advance estimates on a revised basis. Seasonally adjusted preliminary sales for January were little changed from revised December 1978 estimates, but were 15 percent above the revised January 1978 sales. Excluding the automotive group, retail sales were about 1 percent below December and 13 percent over January 1978. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted January sales showed little change from the previous month but were 11 percent above the same month a year earlier. For durable goods stores, adjusted sales for January were virtually unchanged from December but were 21 percent higher than January 1978.

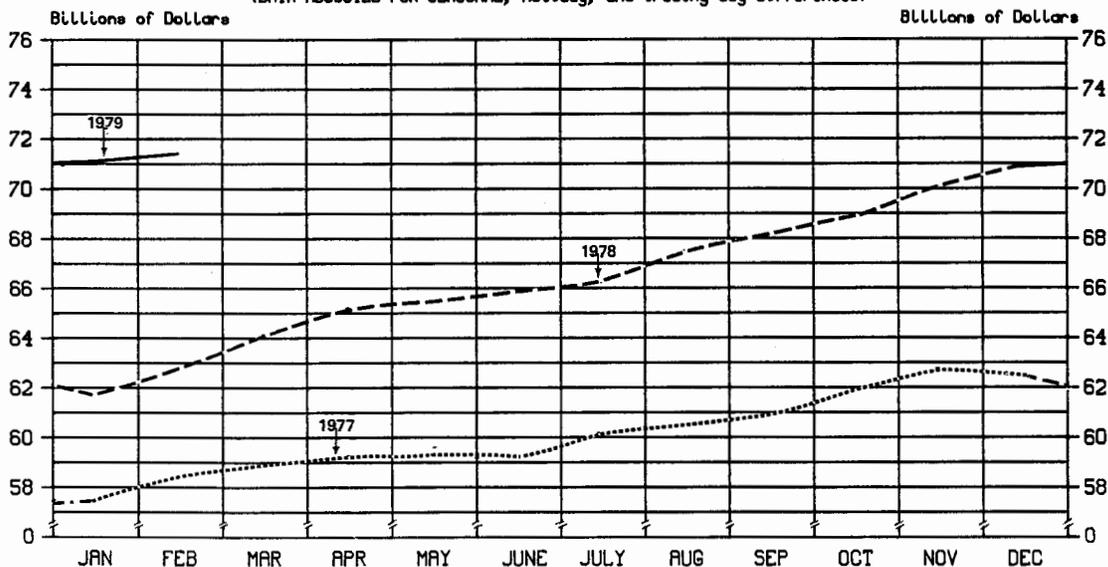
The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the sub-sample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimates prior to publication on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

In the past, differences between advance and full-sample estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have averaged less than 1 percent. However, most modifications being applied to the current advance monthly estimates are based on the relationship between the advance and the redesigned full-sample data for only the months since June 1977. The differences now, therefore, may vary from the past experience.

Preliminary estimates for January 1979 and final estimates for December 1978 based on the full sample will also be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade report for January (BR-79-1). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of the sample design, the basis and methodology used in developing revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. In addition, the complete report will include approximate measures of sampling variability.

### ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES FOR THE UNITED STATES JANUARY 1977 - FEBRUARY 1979

(DATA ADJUSTED FOR SEASONAL, holiday, and trading day differences)



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U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report, the Monthly Retail Trade report, and the Annual Retail Trade report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$25 per year. Add \$6.25 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales report are for sale by Subscriber Services (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 70 cents each.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1979		1978			1979		1978		
		Feb. <sup>2</sup> advance	Jan. prelim.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. <sup>2</sup> advance	Jan. prelim.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.
	Retail trade, total.....	60,852	62,035	84,597	53,612	53,209	71,472	71,031	70,918	62,898	61,892
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	47,680	49,189	72,145	42,493	42,867	56,453	55,972	56,360	50,209	49,333
	Durable goods stores, total.....	21,292	21,123	25,872	17,936	16,944	25,266	25,271	25,163	21,244	20,817
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	2,780	2,834	3,560	2,461	2,341	3,793	3,906	4,009	3,324	3,275
521,3	Building materials and supply stores....	(*)	1,878	2,263	1,644	1,573	(*)	2,514	2,727	2,183	2,155
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	505	749	388	390	(*)	679	631	521	533
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	13,172	12,846	12,452	11,119	10,342	15,019	15,059	14,558	12,689	12,559
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	(*)	11,719	11,169	10,257	9,412	(*)	13,755	13,296	11,603	11,464
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised)....	(*)	10,590	9,979	9,061	8,462	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,127	1,283	862	930	(*)	1,304	1,262	1,086	1,095
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	2,934	2,979	4,216	2,539	2,511	3,404	3,359	3,307	2,934	2,867
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores....	(*)	1,870	2,290	1,537	1,512	(*)	2,108	2,014	1,763	1,730
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	843	1,359	738	758	(*)	957	956	872	872
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	406	595	337	341	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	39,560	40,912	58,725	35,676	36,265	46,206	45,760	45,755	41,654	41,075
53	General merchandise group stores.....	5,995	5,972	15,784	5,524	5,405	8,496	8,439	8,716	7,815	7,698
531	Department stores.....	4,794	4,783	12,635	4,424	4,345	6,868	6,843	6,897	6,338	6,270
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	465	1,273	458	427	(*)	669	649	627	618
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	(*)	724	1,876	642	633	(*)	927	1,170	850	817
54	Food stores.....	14,187	14,910	16,690	12,792	13,061	15,607	15,623	15,284	14,070	13,923
541	Grocery stores.....	13,107	13,733	15,243	11,892	12,141	14,388	14,320	13,984	13,054	12,902
554	Gasoline service stations.....	4,770	5,089	5,318	4,404	4,633	5,420	5,385	5,292	5,005	4,929
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,384	2,685	5,698	2,151	2,293	3,166	3,269	3,376	2,862	2,844
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	558	1,293	421	480	(*)	632	675	570	551
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	987	2,144	836	853	(*)	1,217	1,313	1,089	1,069
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	509	1,153	392	411	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	478	823	374	424	(*)	580	586	496	524
58	Eating and drinking places.....	5,446	5,479	6,141	4,734	4,829	6,400	6,142	6,184	5,563	5,450
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,123	2,136	3,040	1,847	1,875	2,328	2,275	2,232	2,023	2,020
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,068	1,675	922	939	(*)	1,233	1,194	1,102	1,098
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise) <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	439	722	434	437	(*)	604	604	558	603

NOTE: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

<sup>1</sup>Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

<sup>2</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-79-1).<sup>3</sup>Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.<sup>4</sup>Includes sales made by mail-order catalog desks located within department stores of mail-order firms.

**NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES** The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales estimates by kind of business for the United States were revised for the period January 1967 through December 1978. The revisions were designed to minimize differences between original and modified monthly ratios of change, while utilizing results from the 1972 Census of Retail Trade and the 1977 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Data from the 1972 Census were adjusted in order to exclude sales taxes and credit charges from retail sales totals. The revised estimates and a more complete description of methodology will be contained in the Monthly Retail Trade report for January 1979 (BR-79-1) to be released later this month. Complete results from the 1977 Annual Retail Trade Survey are also expected to be released late this month.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Feb. 1979 advance from--		Jan. 1979 preliminary from--		Dec. 1978 through Feb. 1979 from--	
		Jan. 1979 preliminary	Feb. 1978 final	Dec. 1978 final	Jan. 1978 final	Sept. 1978 through Nov. 1978	Dec. 1977 through Feb. 1978
	Retail trade, total.....	+1	+14	0	+15	+3	+14
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+1	+12	-1	+13	+3	+13
	Durable goods stores, total.....	0	+19	0	+21	+3	+19
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-3	+14	-3	+19	0	+19
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	0	+18	+3	+20	+4	+17
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+1	+16	+2	+17	+3	+15
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+1	+11	0	+11	+3	+11
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1	+9	-3	+10	+1	+9
531	Department stores.....	0	+8	-1	+9	+2	+8
54	Food stores.....	0	+11	+2	+12	+4	+12
541	Grocery stores.....	0	+10	+2	+11	+3	+11
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1	+8	+2	+9	+3	+8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-3	+11	-3	+15	-1	+14
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+4	+15	-1	+13	+4	+14
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	+2	+15	+2	+13	+4	+13

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies by Kind of Business for the United States: JANUARY 1979

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Jan. 1979 preliminary	Dec. 1978 final	Jan. 1978	Jan. 1979 preliminary	Dec. 1978 final	Jan. 1978
	Retail trade, total.....	19,909	33,515	17,556	23,476	24,028	20,956
53	General merchandise group stores.....	5,284	14,095	4,764	7,421	7,734	6,738
531	Department stores.....	4,518	11,884	4,109	6,346	6,526	5,820
533	Variety stores.....	386	1,088	329	573	541	490
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	380	1,123	326	(S)	(S)	(S)
54	Food stores.....	8,010	8,985	7,022	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	7,929	8,864	6,939	8,217	8,058	7,312
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	806	2,004	698	1,100	1,151	962
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	329	846	276	459	487	388
566	Shoe stores.....	211	408	183	272	268	237
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,006	1,630	862	1,117	1,055	958

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-79-1).

NA Not available.

(S) Suppressed - Estimates do not meet Bureau of the Census standard for publication.

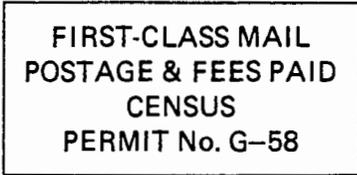


Table 4. Revised 1978 Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(millions of dollars)

	1978												Total
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
	Data NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations holiday, or trading-day differences												
Retail trade, total.....	53,209	53,612	64,764	63,838	67,952	69,056	66,557	69,102	66,219	68,615	71,297	84,597	798,818
Total (excl. automotive group).....	42,867	42,493	50,204	49,456	52,537	53,338	52,263	54,460	53,486	54,214	57,687	72,145	635,150
Durable goods stores, total.....	16,944	17,936	22,777	23,165	25,085	25,685	23,932	24,898	22,563	24,596	24,463	25,872	277,916
Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	2,341	2,461	3,170	3,665	4,115	4,260	4,074	4,308	4,034	4,219	3,918	3,560	44,125
Automotive dealers.....	10,342	11,119	14,560	14,382	15,415	15,718	14,294	14,642	12,733	14,401	13,610	12,452	163,668
Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	2,511	2,539	2,902	2,901	3,074	3,107	3,021	3,224	3,138	3,231	3,566	4,216	37,430
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	36,265	35,676	41,987	40,673	42,867	43,371	42,625	44,204	43,656	44,019	46,834	58,725	520,902
General merchandise group stores.....	5,405	5,524	7,366	7,472	8,017	8,106	7,497	8,165	8,024	8,262	9,883	15,784	99,505
Department stores.....	4,345	4,424	5,894	6,010	6,431	6,522	5,965	6,520	6,468	6,610	7,908	12,635	79,732
Food stores.....	13,061	12,792	14,529	13,865	14,528	14,936	15,006	14,858	14,942	14,417	14,834	16,690	174,458
Grocery stores.....	12,141	11,892	13,482	12,862	13,455	13,848	13,941	13,781	13,892	13,295	13,695	15,243	161,527
Gasoline service stations.....	4,633	4,404	4,906	4,889	5,156	5,256	5,283	5,387	5,191	5,264	5,197	5,318	60,884
Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,293	2,151	2,940	2,816	2,906	2,892	2,754	3,194	3,236	3,273	3,675	5,698	37,828
Eating and drinking places.....	4,829	4,734	5,579	5,719	6,024	6,220	6,395	6,527	6,134	6,006	5,775	6,141	70,083
Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,875	1,847	2,070	1,940	2,060	2,069	2,016	2,109	2,041	2,106	2,164	3,040	25,337
	Data ADJUSTED for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences												
Retail trade, total.....	61,892	62,898	64,075	65,146	65,522	65,964	66,224	67,303	68,085	68,971	70,158	70,918	
Total (excl. automotive group).....	49,333	50,209	50,943	51,609	52,002	52,326	52,734	53,408	54,052	54,619	55,727	56,360	
Durable goods stores, total.....	20,817	21,244	21,813	22,617	22,730	22,947	23,049	23,617	23,872	24,422	24,954	25,163	
Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	3,275	3,324	3,397	3,609	3,590	3,651	3,707	3,809	3,798	3,911	3,971	4,009	
Automotive dealers.....	12,559	12,689	13,132	13,537	13,520	13,638	13,490	13,895	14,033	14,352	14,431	14,558	
Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	2,867	2,934	2,924	3,061	3,116	3,071	3,091	3,170	3,228	3,248	3,303	3,307	
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	41,075	41,654	42,262	42,529	42,792	43,017	43,175	43,686	44,213	44,549	45,204	45,755	
General merchandise group stores.....	7,698	7,815	7,952	8,048	8,236	8,294	8,287	8,361	8,379	8,394	8,549	8,716	
Department stores.....	6,270	6,338	6,420	6,462	6,609	6,662	6,650	6,701	6,696	6,684	6,806	6,897	
Food stores.....	13,923	14,070	14,177	14,298	14,375	14,420	14,609	14,629	14,775	14,947	15,125	15,284	
Grocery stores.....	12,902	13,054	13,153	13,273	13,335	13,393	13,574	13,577	13,687	13,835	13,960	13,984	
Gasoline service stations.....	4,929	5,005	4,996	4,994	5,020	5,030	4,887	5,082	5,191	5,222	5,276	5,292	
Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,844	2,862	2,983	3,064	3,062	3,074	3,126	3,221	3,261	3,271	3,388	3,376	
Eating and drinking places.....	5,450	5,563	5,787	5,794	5,672	5,770	5,867	5,923	5,996	6,018	6,003	6,184	
Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,020	2,023	2,050	2,042	2,058	2,075	2,102	2,135	2,158	2,180	2,240	2,232	

NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales estimates by kind of business for the United States were revised for the period January 1967 through December 1978. The revisions were designed to minimize differences between original and modified monthly ratios of change, while utilizing results from the 1972 Census of Retail Trade and the 1977 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Data from the 1972 Census were adjusted in order to exclude sales taxes and credit charges from retail sales totals. The revised estimates for the months of 1976 through 1978 and a more complete description of methodology will be contained in the Monthly Retail Trade report for January 1979 BR-79-1, to be released later this month. Complete results from the 1977 Annual Retail Trade Survey are also expected to be released late this month.